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**PERCEIVED SCHOLASTIC COMPETENCE IN CHILDREN:
WHAT ROLES DO ACCULTURATIVE STRESS AND COPING PLAY?**

**A Thesis
Presented to the
Faculty of
California State University,
San Bernardino**

**In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts
in
Psychology**

**by
Virginia Rabor Moran**

September 1994

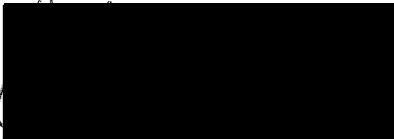
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September 1994

Approved by:



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8/25/94
Date



Joanna Worthley, Psychology



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ABSTRACT

An examination of the effects of acculturative stress and coping on perceived competence in children was conducted using samples of Euroamerican and Latino school-aged children (mean age 9 years, 10 months) recruited from public suburban elementary schools in southern California. It was hypothesized that Latino children would report significantly higher levels of acculturative stress and lower levels of social acceptance than would their Euroamerican peers. Results found support for these hypotheses. Hierarchical regression analysis conducted to determine the relative contributions of ethnic background, acculturative stress, emotion-focused coping, problem-focused coping, and self-perceived scholastic competence to teacher's perceptions of subject's scholastic competence found 16.8% of the variance in teacher's perceptions could be accounted for by the aforementioned variables, $F(5, 74) = 2.987, p < .05$; only self-perceived scholastic competence was found to be a significant predictor, $\beta = .275, p < .05$. Two models were also tested to determine whether emotion-focused or problem-focused coping mediated the effects of acculturative stress on self-perceived scholastic competence in Latinos; neither model was supported. A test to determine whether the interaction of acculturative stress and emotion-focused coping mediated the effects of self-perceived scholastic competence in Latinos on teacher's perceptions was also conducted, but similarly was not supported. Findings are discussed in terms of implications for current policies and programs of affirmative action.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Many thanks to the members of my thesis committee, without whose time, support, and guidance this endeavor would not have been possible. You were all chosen for your unique gifts: To Jan Kottke, "quant head" extraordinaire, thanks for your understanding and appreciation of *real life* (or, in your words, "messy") research. Your example contributed to my own appreciation for (and subsequent pursuit of a doctoral program in) applied research. To Joanna Worthley, possessed of the keen eyes and sharp wit of an accomplished editor, I thank you for your thoughtful critique of this work and, more importantly, am most indebted to you for your influence early in my professional development (*i.e.*, as an undergrad in your Adolescence class -- my decision to study psych came shortly thereafter). Last, but in no way the least of my committee members, to David Chavez, the most significant factor accounting for the variance in my scholastic accomplishments to date! Your mentoring, therapizing, and philosophizing about life made the best times better, and the really bad times a little more bearable. Thank you for always being there to hear me prattle on at 90 words-a-minute about nothing in particular (so do you really think I have ADHD or what?)... and for being my shoulder to cry on when life happened! A special note to David's boss: Thank you for your patience and friendship, Val. You are both special to me and to my family! Speaking of patience, friendship, and my family... an extra special thanks to Joe, Jessica, Alyssa, and (of course!) Mom, Dad, Carmen and Ernie, without whom my work would be meaningless. My eternal love to you all... and my eternal commitment to God above (2 Cor 6:4).

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INTRODUCTION

In the landmark *Brown* decision of 1954, the Supreme Court held that the then-segregated public school system served to deny African American children the right to equal protection of the laws guaranteed by the Fourteenth Amendment. In his delivery of the opinion of the Court, Chief Justice Warren stated that "to separate (African American children) from others of similar age and qualifications solely because of their race generates a feeling of inferiority as to their status in the community that may affect their hearts and minds in a way unlikely ever to be undone" (*Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka*, 1954, § 492). Echoing the expert testimony of psychologist Kenneth Clark, the Court recognized segregation as damaging to the well-being of ethnic minority school children (see Clark & Clark, 1939, 1940).

In the 20 years that followed, while public schools across the nation undertook the arduous task of implementing integration, social science researchers began the equally arduous task of assessing the impact of desegregation on school achievement (Armor, 1972; Coleman, 1966; Jencks, 1972; Pettigrew, Useem, Normand, & Smith, 1973; Smith, 1972; Weinberg, 1975). Findings from such research were numerous and diverse; an argument could be made for both the benefits and drawbacks of desegregation. Despite such mixed findings, policy-makers were consumed with the notion of affirmative action -- as if to assume that policies or programs could be devised that would somehow rectify past wrongs.

Forty years have elapsed since *Brown*. Despite the well-meaning intentions of various affirmative action programs designed to improve (among other things) the educational experience of ethnic minorities, recent national statistics regarding school achievement call into question the effectiveness of such programs: The percentage of 9-year old students at or above a basic reading comprehension level (i.e., an ability to follow brief written directions and choose phrases to describe pictures) was 93.5% among Euroamerican students, while only 76.9% among African Americans and 83.7% among Hispanics. The writing performance of Euroamericans in the fourth grade was 7.6 points above the average, while African Americans and Hispanics scored (respectively) 28.3 points and 15.5 points below the average. The percentage of 9-year old Euroamerican students able to perform basic math operations and solve problems was 32.7%, contrasted with only 9.4% among African Americans and 11.3% among Hispanics. The percentage of 9-year old Euroamerican students able to understand simple scientific principles was 84.4%, while the percentage of African Americans and Hispanics was 46.4% and 56.3% respectively. Finally, the overall high school dropout rates among 18 and 19 year old African Americans was 14%, and 32.7% among Hispanics; contrast this with only 10.1% among Euroamericans (National Center for Education Statistics, 1992).

The source of this problem of underachievement among ethnic minorities does not lie within a particular program of affirmative action; nor does the solution. Rather, what may be in order is a re-evaluation of an old idea: Can it be assumed that the "feeling of inferiority" described in the *Brown* decision no longer exists

among ethnic minority school children in light of the past 40 years of integration?

The premise of this thesis is that the answer is no. Chief Justice Warren's almost prophetic statement in the decision ("*in a way unlikely ever to be undone*") reflects a deeper level of understanding of the effects of discrimination not evident in the simplistic solution of desegregating the public schools. Clearly, there are a myriad of variables which may account for differences in children's feelings about their level of competence, as well as their subsequent performance in school.

While factors such as socioeconomic status (SES) have previously been shown to be associated with ethnic minority children's school performance -- specifically, parental education was shown to be a better predictor of children's verbal performance than was parental income for both high school (Buriel & Cardoza, 1988) and elementary school students (Laosa, 1982) -- more recently, Cooper (1990) found SES to be a nonsignificant factor in predicting reading and math achievement among African American and Latino school children. Rather than having a direct effect, Cooper describes SES as providing a kind of infrastructure within which child achievement outcomes are potentially influenced: "SES is translated into specific family socialization patterns that may enhance the minority child's adaptation to public schools" (p. 179). It is these socialization patterns that will be the primary focus herein.

The socialization experience of ethnic minority children involves certain stressors which are qualitatively different from those encountered by white children.

Most notably, continued prejudice towards certain ethnic groups and the persistence of

negative stereotypes about group members (see Crosby, Bromley & Saxe, 1980; Gaertner & Dovidio, 1986 for reviews) may impact an ethnic minority child in such a way that he/she feels inferior. This, in turn, may affect the child's performance in school (Ogbu, 1986).

In a study of the effects of prejudice on stress and school performance, Gougis (1986) demonstrated that college students exposed to racist comments about members of their own ethnic group reported a moderate degree of emotional distress, and their performance on a subsequent learning task was significantly impaired. With regard to school-aged children, it seems plausible that with an increased use of both social comparison processes (Ruble, 1983) and the reactions of others in self-evaluations of performance (Ruble, Boggiano, Feldman, & Loebler, 1980; Selman, 1976), in addition to the increased salience of the stressors associated with "feeling different" (Omizo, Omizo, & Suzuki, 1988), ethnic minority children may become particularly vulnerable to the negative feedback which stigma and stereotype provide.

In addition, the process of acculturation -- *i.e.*, of adapting or adjusting to differences which may exist between the culture of the larger society in which one lives and the culture found in the home -- is an inherent part of the socialization of ethnic minority children and potentially involves additional stressors for them. Born (1970) has referred to this phenomenon as "acculturative stress;" he suggests that how a person responds to and copes with acculturative stress will determine such outcomes as well-being and adjustment. According to Born, these outcomes lie on a continuum

in which positive outcomes result from a reconciliation of both cultures, while negative outcomes result from a rejection of both cultures.

Born's (1970) description of reconciliation suggests no distinction between acculturation and assimilation; that is, the well-adjusted, well-adapted individual is merely one who has replaced traditional values by internalizing the values, attitudes, and beliefs of the dominant culture. Little, if any, of the values, attitudes, and/or behaviors consistent with the culture of origin is maintained.

While Born's (1970) general proposal that one's coping response to acculturative stress influences outcomes is a reasonable one, the idea that positive outcomes are solely the result of reconciling cultures by assimilating the dominant culture seems inadequate, in that it precludes the possibility that other strategies can be equally or more adaptive and advantageous.

For example, in a review of the literature on ethnic identity and self-esteem, Phinney (1991) reports that the combination of a strong ethnic identity and a positive orientation toward the dominant culture has been associated with high self-esteem. Accordingly, acculturation as used herein will refer to the general process of adaptation by an ethnic individual to the stress which arises from that individual's immersion in two distinct cultures, rather than a specific outcome of adopting dominant culture attributes.

Furthermore, because of the dearth of knowledge about acculturation in childhood, an emphasis will be placed on children's experiences with and coping response to acculturative stress, their perceptions of their own scholastic competence,

and the relation of these variables to their teachers' perceptions of scholastic competence. As existing models of school achievement have stressed the importance of the socialization process -- *i.e.*, the impact key socializing agents have on a child's developing overall sense of self and his/her level of competence (*e.g.*, Eccles, et al., 1983) -- it is plausible that acculturative stress has the potential to impact a child's self-perceptions, a child's feelings of competence, and, ultimately, that child's actual performance in school.

Given that the socialization process for ethnic minority children potentially involves additional stressors (namely, the stigmatization of prejudice and negative stereotypes, and the challenge of acculturation), in addition to the historically poorer school performance of ethnic minorities in general, an investigation into the effects of acculturative stress on perceptions of scholastic competence seems warranted -- particularly in light of the tremendous public policy implications relevant to these issues.

The purpose of this thesis, therefore, is to examine children's experiences with and coping responses to acculturative stress, their self-perceived competence, and the impact these variables might have on teacher's perceptions of the child's scholastic competence.

A Socialization Model of School Achievement

Eccles and her colleagues (Eccles et al., 1983) have proposed a model of achievement behaviors (*i.e.*, persistence in pursuing math, choice of math courses, and performance in those courses) that is comprised of two general components: the

child's own cognitive factors (i.e., the child's perception of his/her own abilities and of socializers' perceptions of the child's abilities), and the child's socializers' (specifically, parents and teachers) actual perceptions of and attitudes about the child's abilities.

In testing this model with a large sample of students in grades 5 through 12, Eccles et al. (1983) found that a child's intention to take more math courses was directly influenced by the child's self-concept of his/her own math ability, the value the child assigns to math, and the child's perception of socializers' perceptions of the child's math ability. The child's self-concept of math ability was most notably influenced by the child's perception of socializers' perceptions of the child's math ability. Similarly, the value a child places on a particular task was influenced by the child's perception of socializers' perceptions of the child's math ability, as well as the child's perception of parents' aspirations, and teacher's actual perception of the child's math ability.

In more general terms, a child's intention to follow a particular academic endeavor can be thought of as stemming directly from the child's beliefs about the merits of that endeavor (i.e., task valuation) and about his/her own ability to do well (i.e., expectancies for success), and indirectly from parents' and teacher's beliefs (as the child perceives them) about the child's ability.

Given the impact of socializer's perceptions about the child on the child's self-concept of his/her ability, it is reasonable to suggest that negative beliefs about a child's academic abilities would have a negative effect on the child's self-concept of

those abilities. In turn, a child with a negative self-concept about his/her academic abilities would not be inclined to follow academic pursuits.

Eccles et al. (1983) do not report any effects of ethnic background (their primary concern was with gender effects in math achievement). Hence, one may logically question the relevance of this model for ethnic children, given the fact that ethnic minorities as a whole have been saddled with certain stereotypes about their abilities (e.g., Asian Americans do well in math and science but not in language arts; African Americans are athletic, but not very academic; Latinos are lazy and not particularly good in school).

Following this model, it is plausible that such stereotypes may negatively influence socializers' beliefs about an ethnic minority child's abilities, as well as their beliefs about how important and/or difficult a particular task is for that child -- very much the same way Eccles and her colleagues (1983) have suggested negative stereotypes about females and math have negatively influenced socializers' beliefs about females' math abilities. It is possible, then, that socializer's negative beliefs may negatively influence the ethnic minority child's own assessment of his/her abilities and the child's valuation of a particular task, thereby discouraging that child from making certain choices about his/her academic future and any subsequent career goals.

To illustrate this point, recent work by Steinberg, Dornbusch, and Brown (1992) revealed that, although Asian American, African American, and Hispanic high school students agreed that getting a good education would increase the likelihood of

getting a good job, the perceived results of not getting a good education differed among the groups: Asian American students believed it would limit their chances of getting a good job, whereas African Americans and Hispanics believed that it would not limit their chances of getting a good job. While the researchers concluded that this "unwarranted optimism" (p. 726) among African American and Hispanic students served to limit their school performance, it seems just as likely that the concept of a "good job" is different for these groups because of their different socialization experiences -- e.g., if parents and teachers perceive a child to be mechanically inclined rather than academically inclined, their behavior and attitude toward that child will reflect that belief. In turn, that child will internalize those beliefs about his/her abilities and set goals according to those perceived abilities.

Another plausible explanation for the differences in attitudes among the high school students in Steinberg et al.'s (1992) study may be that ethnic minorities may perceive the outcomes of getting a good education as differentially determined according to the color of one's skin. Any benefits for ethnic minorities which may result from a good education may be viewed as inevitably outweighed by discriminatory treatment (R. Buriel, personal communication, January 20, 1994).

The suggested impact of negative stereotypes on an ethnic minority child's self-concept of abilities and the subsequent bearing this would have on school achievement is speculative and not intended as a blanket description of the experience of all minorities. Clearly, there are ethnic minority children who are academically

successful, in spite of (or, perhaps, as a result of) their experience with prejudice, negative stereotypes, and acculturation.

If, as Mena et al. (1987) have described, the acculturation process begins "as a result of contact and interaction between two or more autonomous cultural groups" (p. 207), then this process would not commence until the individual is first able to identify differences between people -- one of the first steps in the formation of an ethnic identity. Consequently, a discussion of acculturation in children necessitates an understanding of the minority child's developing ethnic identity.

Development of Ethnic Identity

The development of ethnic identity in a child corresponds with the development of certain cognitive abilities. In order to identify him/herself with a particular ethnic group, a child must first be able to differentiate one ethnic group from another; furthermore, the child must be able to integrate him/herself with his/her ethnic group, as well as integrate that group with other groups in the larger society (Aboud & Christian, 1979).

In a study of the development of ethnic identity among Latino school-aged children (ages ranging from 3.6 to 6.3 years, with a mean age of 4.7 years), Bernal and her colleagues (Bernal, Knight, Garza, Ocampo & Cota, 1990) identified five components of ethnic identity similar to those enumerated by others (e.g., Aboud, 1987; Rotheram & Phinney, 1987): ethnic self-identification, ethnic constancy, use of ethnic role behaviors, knowledge of ethnic group values and customs, and ethnic preference. Findings from this study indicate that ethnic self-identification (the ability

to both appropriately label themselves as well as associate themselves with the correct ethnic group) develops in children after the age of six. As with gender self-identification, ethnic self-identification tends to increase with age, particularly as children gain an understanding of ethnic constancy (reported by several researchers to develop by approximately 8 years of age; Aboud & Skerry, 1983; Semaj, 1981).

With regard to both ethnic knowledge and preference, Bernal et al. (1990) found that these factors increased with age. While ethnic role behaviors were not found to increase with age, the researchers suggested this may be due to an age-appropriate lack of behavioral autonomy. Ethnic role behaviors are imposed upon the child by parents virtually from the day the child is born; therefore, this component of ethnic identity is not dependent on the child's cognitive ability. That is, performing ethnic role behaviors do not require a child's understanding of those behaviors as unique to their particular culture.

It appears that by the age of 9 years children are able to understand their ethnic identity and all it entails: The child is able to use an appropriate ethnic label to identify him/herself and others in the ethnic group; the child knows that he/she will always be a member of that ethnic group; and the child understands and participates in some of the customs, values, and traditions particular to that ethnic group.

In addition, following cognitive readiness to recognize differences between ethnic groups, children become able to categorize people into appropriate groups. Such categorization of people then allows a child to make certain social comparisons regarding the value of one group contrasted with other groups; this process of social

comparison then contributes to a child's developing sense of self (Festinger, 1954).

Hence, conflicts may begin to arise as a result of these social comparisons if the child identifies him/herself with a devalued group (e.g., an ethnic minority group stigmatized by negative stereotypes; Bernal, Saenz, & Knight, 1991; Crocker & Major, 1989).

Therefore, it is possible that for the ethnic child, the process of social comparison, coupled with the previously described "contact and interaction" (Mena et al., 1987, p. 207) between distinct cultural groups with potentially different values and beliefs, may cause the child to experience anxiety. If the child perceives him/herself as belonging to a devalued ethnic group, and if he/she encounters differences in what is valued in the home (e.g., for collectivist cultures, emphasis is placed on what benefits the group as a whole) contrasted with what is valued at school (e.g., in American culture, emphasis is placed on individual success), that child may begin to experience acculturative stress.

Acculturative Stress in Children

A presumably inherent consequence of the acculturation process, acculturative stress results when differences exist between ethnic group values and beliefs and those of the larger society, causing anxiety in the individual who feels compelled to either lessen or reconcile those differences (Born, 1970). In studies of the relation between acculturative stress and self-esteem, researchers have found that higher levels of acculturative stress are associated with low self-esteem (Chan, 1977; Mena, Padilla & Maldonado, 1987; Padilla, Alvarez, & Lindholm, 1986; Padilla, Wagatsuma, &

Lindholm, 1985). Given the impact self-perceptions have on school achievement, one can reasonably assume that acculturative stress may also have an indirect impact on school achievement.

In fact, in a qualitative study of successful African American college students, Kraft (1991) ascertained students' causal beliefs about their school performance, and found that self-assessments of performance were made not only in terms of personal qualities, but also in terms of how students' believed they were perceived by others. That is, students were not able to evaluate their abilities without consideration of their beliefs about how others perceived them.

This sensitivity to others' perceptions is certainly not limited to ethnic minorities; clearly, there is a human tendency to consider "reflected appraisals" by the "looking-glass self" or "generalized other" in our attempts to understand ourselves (Cooley, 1956; Markus & Nurius, 1984; Mead, 1934). Rather, the difference lies in the interpretation of these perceptions: The existence of stereotypes may taint not only how others perceive ethnic minorities, but also how ethnic minorities perceive themselves and others' perceptions of themselves. Research has suggested that this, in turn, may affect the ethnic minority's intellectual performance and school achievement (Steele, 1993).

For example, in a study of ethnic identity, self-esteem, and awareness of minority status among Latino adolescents, Chavira and Phinney (1991) found that 88% of the subjects, regardless of level of self-esteem, asserted that society holds negative stereotypes about Hispanics; moreover, 77% experienced some form of

discrimination. Hence, how an ethnic minority perceives other people's perceptions of him/herself does not occur independently of existing negative stereotypes; clearly, ethnic minorities are aware such stereotypes exist.

Rather than having an automatic and immediate negative effect on self-perceptions, researchers have suggested instead that the effects of this experience with negative stereotypes and discrimination are mediated by how one copes with the stress which may result (Bernal, Saenz, & Knight, 1991; Born, 1970; Chavira & Phinney, 1991; Crocker & Major, 1989).

Coping and Self-Perceptions in Children

Past researchers have emphasized the transactional nature of stress and coping (Curry & Russ, 1985; Lazarus & Folkman, 1984; Lazarus & Launier, 1978; Murphy & Moriarty, 1976; Wertlieb, Weigel, & Feldstein, 1987). Lazarus and Folkman (1984) have further emphasized the importance of examining context-specific coping strategies rather than a "static measure of a general trait or personality disposition" (p. 142). Consequently, coping as used herein will refer to the particular response or strategy employed specifically to manage acculturative stress, rather than to a general style of coping.

Although many theoretical models of stress and coping exist (see Compas, 1987 for a review), researchers have generally agreed in conceptualizing coping as serving two functions: solving the problem which caused the stress (i.e., a problem-focused strategy), or regulating one's emotional response to the stress (i.e., a palliative or emotion-focused strategy; Compas, Banez, Malcarne, & Worsham, 1991;

Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). According to Weisz (1986), whether an individual chooses a problem-focused or palliative strategy for coping with a particular stressor depends on a complex interplay between the individual's perceptions of stress and his/her control-related beliefs.

Weisz (1986) theorizes that personal control is directly derived from both an individual's self-perceived competence, and his/her perception of the contingencies of the situation -- i.e., that individual's beliefs about what the outcomes depend on: internal factors (e.g., individual effort or skill), external factors (e.g., luck or powerful others), or unknown factors. Weisz has proposed a model of control-related beliefs, coping, and emotional arousal which suggests that an individual employs two cognitive appraisals in confronting a stressful situation:

In the Primary Appraisal, a perceived threat results in some emotional arousal (i.e., stress), to which the individual responds with an emotion-focused strategy. In the Second Appraisal, the individual's perceptions of contingency and competence dictates his/her sense of personal control. If personal control is perceived to be high, a problem-focused strategy will be employed; in turn, a strategy which successfully alters (i.e., ameliorates negative effects of) the stressor may result in enhanced feelings of control, as well as lowered levels of emotional distress.

Perceptions of low personal control, on the other hand, are not directly related to an increased use of emotion-focused strategies. Rather, when perceptions of low control are combined with a problem-focused strategy, high levels of emotional

distress have been found (Compas, Malcarne, & Fondacaro, 1988; Forsythe & Compas, 1987).

Compas et al. (1991) refer to this coupling of problem-focused coping with low control as a "poor match" between coping and control, while problem-focused coping with high control is a "good match" (p. 30). Weisz's (1986) model suggests that the coping-control match will be reflected not only in the level of emotional distress, but also in the individual's sense of personal control in subsequent stressful situations. With an alteration in one's sense of personal control, it seems plausible that perceptions of contingency and competence might also be affected.

In addition to the complex relation between stress, personal control, and coping, researchers have found some indications of a developmental change in the use of coping strategies that are consistent with cognitive readiness: Problem-focused strategies are employed early in childhood, while emotion-focused strategies increase in use during the period of later childhood through adolescence, and level off by late adolescence (Altshuler & Ruble, 1989; Compas et al., 1991; Curry & Russ, 1985; Wertlieb, Weigel, & Feldstein, 1987).

With regard to coping with acculturative stress specifically, Mena, Padilla and Maldonado (1987) found differences in levels of acculturative stress and preferred coping strategies among ethnically diverse college students grouped according to generational status: late or early immigrants, later (second or third) generation, or mixed generation (i.e., one parent foreign-born, the other U.S.-born). As found in previous studies (Padilla et al., 1985, 1986), late immigrants (those students who

immigrated after the age of 12) experienced significantly higher levels of acculturative stress when compared to all other groups. In addition, the late immigrants tended to utilize the following coping strategy more frequently than all other groups: "I try to actively find out more about the situation and I take some positive, planned action" (p. 210). In contrast, second- and third-generation groups more often chose this strategy: "I talk with others about the problem (friends, relatives; p. 210)."

Of the seven other options offered, four coping strategies were never used in dealing with acculturative stress: "I try to reduce tension (e.g., drink, eat, drugs, smoke more, exercise);" "I pray and/or consult a priest or minister;" "I seek professional advice;" and "I draw upon my past experiences; perhaps, similar situations might help" (Mena et al., 1987, p. 210). The remaining three strategies were rarely used and, if so, only in situations of lower stress: "I don't worry about it. Everything will probably work fine;" "I become involved in other activities in order to keep my mind off the problem;" and "I seek support from members of my cultural group" (p. 210).

Mena et al. (1987) suggested that the choice by late immigrants to utilize an active, problem-focused coping strategy in dealing with acculturative stress may result from their lack of options: As new arrivals to this country, the late immigrant's social support network may not be extensive, thereby making a direct course of action the only alternative. The social support networks of later generation individuals, on the other hand, are likely to be rather extensive; hence, social support-seeking becomes a viable coping alternative -- and one which they overwhelmingly prefer.

In addition to higher levels of acculturative stress, late immigrants also reported the lowest levels of self-esteem; in contrast, later generation groups reported the highest levels. These differences in self-esteem, however, cannot simply be accredited to the differences in preferred coping strategies, as later generation groups also reported significantly lower levels of acculturative stress. Mena et al. (1987) suggest that, since the late immigrants' lower self-esteem did not appear to impede their efforts to take direct measures in dealing with acculturative stress, the problem-focused strategy may eventually facilitate an increase in self-esteem in late immigrants.

This suggestion seems to run counter to what is implied by Weisz's (1986) model of coping: If it can be assumed that late immigrants' perceive their personal control to be low (as Weisz has proposed, low self-esteem would contribute to a perception of low control), and they utilize a problem-focused strategy to cope with acculturative stress, then this poor match would result in continued emotional distress, lingering perceptions of low control, and, over time, a persistence (or, perhaps, even lowering) of an already low self-esteem.

Although Mena et al.'s (1987) data do not permit a clear interpretation of the relation between coping and self-perceptions, Weisz's (1986) model of coping suggests, by process of elimination, that an emotion-focused strategy might prove to be the more advantageous approach to take when dealing with acculturative stress -- particularly, given the more frequent use of an emotion-focused strategy by

individuals who may have had to deal with acculturative stress longer (i.e., early immigrants).

However, rather than there being a prescribed, single-best strategy for dealing with acculturative stress, it seems more plausible that any effects of acculturative stress on self-perceptions are mediated by coping when the level of stress is perceived to be high, while at lower stress levels other factors may have greater influence. Those factors include not only perceived control, but also more enduring factors such as effectance motivation (White, 1959) or perceived competence (Harter, 1978, 1982).

Given that the coping strategy used to deal with acculturative stress potentially impacts self-perceptions, how then do those self-perceptions impact actual performance and, in turn, others' perceptions?

Perceived Competence and School Achievement

According to Harter's (1978) model of perceived competence, in order to increase effectance motivation, a child must have opportunities to make mastery attempts. Such opportunities are an inherent part of the formal education process: Daily performance demands are placed on the child in the presence of peers and key socializers (teachers in the classroom and parents in the home who help the child with school work). Given a child whose mastery attempts have been successful, Harter's model dictates that effectance motivation (which is intrinsic in nature) would increase.

However, follow-up work by Harter (1981) has revealed that over time children become more extrinsic in their motivational orientation: Children in higher grade levels preferred easier work assignments over challenging ones, and they

depended more on teachers rather than themselves when trying to solve problems.

Moreover, older children credited teacher approval and grades, rather than curiosity or interest, as motivating their work efforts.

While children were found to be more intrinsic in determining what to do (relying more on independent judgment rather than on the teacher's judgment) and in assessing their own performance, it is possible that this is a function of experience: By the ninth grade, children know what to do in a school setting and are quite familiar with methods used in assessing their performance.

Because Harter (1982, 1985) has tested her model using samples comprised primarily of white children, it is not known whether perceived competence in ethnic minorities is similarly a function of the outcomes of past attempts at mastery (with successful outcomes facilitating self-perceived competence and failed outcomes hindering it).

Moreover, although Harter's (1985, 1989) emphasis on comparing a child's global self-worth with both domain-specific competencies (in the areas of scholastic competence, social acceptance, athletic competence, physical appearance, and behavioral conduct) and a consideration of how important each domain is to a child is a much improved approach to understanding how children perceive themselves, it is difficult to ascertain how useful such a formulation will be for ethnic minority individuals. As most ethnic minorities in this country come from collectivist cultures which emphasize group over individual concerns, a global concept of "the self" is

oftentimes even more elusive than it has been among white subjects (R. Buriel, personal communication, December 4, 1992).

That notwithstanding, given the specificity of each domain, Harter's (1982, 1985) multidimensional model of the self seems the best approach to take in determining what an individual from a collectivist culture understands about distinct aspects of him/herself.

Any predictions regarding the relation between self-perceived competence and school achievement might be improved by referring again to the model of achievement behaviors proposed by Eccles et al. (1983) described earlier. To reiterate, this model indicates a direct relation between task value -- which is conceptually similar to Harter's (1985, 1989) notion of importance -- and expectancies for success -- similar to Harter's notion of self-perceived competence, such that high levels of both task value (importance) and positive expectancies for success (high levels of self-perceived competence) would be associated with high levels of school achievement; hence, scholastic competence as perceived by others would also tend to be high.

With regard to ethnic minority children, research has indicated that the subjective appraisals of their own abilities by ethnic minority students have, in some cases, facilitated what Alva (1991) has termed "academic invulnerability:" The ability to "sustain high levels of achievement motivation and performance, despite the presence of stressful events and conditions that place (students) at risk of doing poorly in school and, ultimately, dropping out of school" (p. 19). However, research has also indicated that immigrants, despite reported low levels of self-esteem (Mena et al.,

1987), tend to be more academically successful than later generation ethnic minorities (Buriel, 1987, 1993).

It is clear that the relations between and among acculturative stress, coping, self- and other's perceptions of competence in ethnic minorities is a complex web which has yet to be untangled.

Rationale for Hypotheses

To facilitate interpretation of findings, the groups of children studied herein were either Latino or Euroamerican.

Differences in acculturative stress. Given that the socialization experience of ethnic minority children involves additional stressors not typically experienced by white children -- namely, the challenge of acculturation (Born, 1970) as well as the stigmatization of prejudice (Crocker & Major, 1989) and negative stereotypes (Crosby, Bromley & Saxe, 1980; Gaertner & Dovidio, 1986), it is hypothesized that Latino children will report higher levels of acculturative stress than will Euroamerican children.

Differences in self-perceived social acceptance. Given an increase in the use of social comparison processes (Ruble, 1983) and reactions of others in self-evaluations of performance (Ruble et al., 1980; Selman, 1976), and the salience of "feeling different" (Omizo, Omizo, & Suzuki, 1988), many school-aged children may feel socially insecure. The ethnic child may additionally identify him/herself with a devalued group stigmatized by negative stereotypes (Bernal, Saenz, Knight, 1991). It

is, therefore, hypothesized that Latinos will report lower levels of social competence than will Euroamericans.

Teacher's perceptions of subject's scholastic competence. With regard to the complex relations among such variables as ethnic background, acculturative stress, coping, children's perceptions of their own competence as well as their teacher's perceptions, a hierarchical regression analysis will be performed to determine the relative contributions of acculturative stress, coping, and self-perceived scholastic competence to teacher's perceptions of the child's scholastic competence as determined by his/her actual behavior in school.

Mediating influence of coping. Finally, an investigation of the ideas implicitly suggested by Weisz's model of coping as it relates to acculturative stress will be conducted. Specifically, the following question will be addressed: For ethnic minorities who presumably experience higher levels of acculturative stress, is the impact of that stress on self-perceived scholastic competence mediated by emotion-focused coping or problem-focused coping (see Figure 1)?

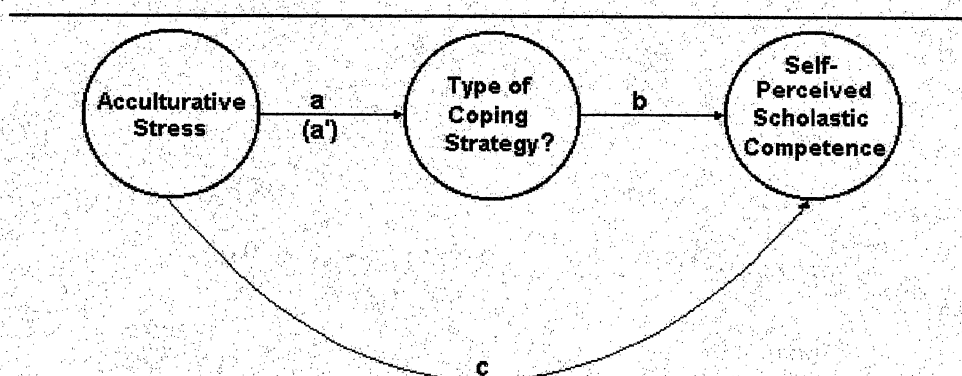


Figure 1. Simple mediation model of influence of coping. Perfect mediation exists when the path coefficients are as follows: $a \neq 0$, $b \neq 0$, $c = 0$.

Additionally, based on the suggestion herein that emotion-focused coping strategies may provide for a better fit with acculturative stress (i.e., the interaction thereof), a second question will also be addressed: Is the impact of self-perceived scholastic competence of ethnic minorities on teacher's perceptions of scholastic competence mediated by the extent to which acculturative stress is managed via emotion-focused strategies (see Figure 2)?

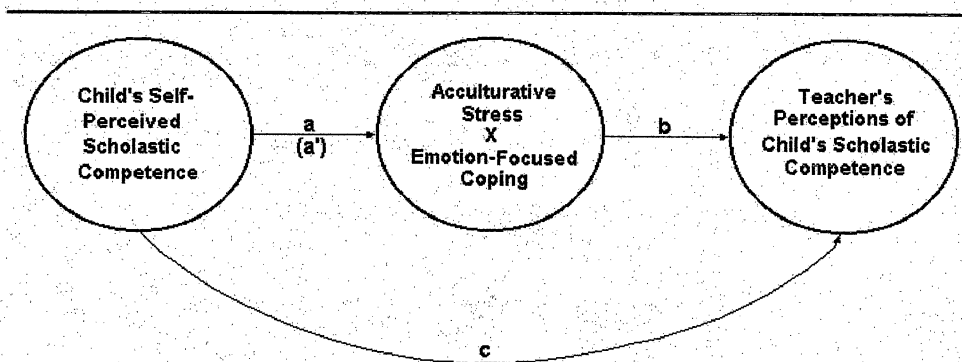


Figure 2. Model of mediating influence of interaction between acculturative stress and emotion-focused coping on impact of self-perceived scholastic competence on teacher's perception.

METHOD

Subjects

Subjects were eighty children (32 Euroamericans, 48 Latinos) recruited from racially diverse fourth and fifth grade classrooms in several suburban elementary schools in Southern California, with a mean age of approximately 9 years, 10 months. The Euroamerican sample was comprised of 17 female and 15 male subjects; all children in this sample were U.S.-born and spoke only English. The Latino sample was comprised of 24 female and 24 male subjects, most of whom were U.S.-born (78.7%). Language preference for children in this sample was as follows: English (66.0%), Spanish (12.8%), either English or Spanish (21.2%). The measures described below were administered in Spanish for those subjects who expressed a preference; all others were given measures in English.

Measures

The questionnaire packet used was comprised of the measures described below (see Appendix A). With regard to the sequence for administering each measure, demographic information was always solicited from each subject first, while all other measures were completely counterbalanced to control for carry-over effects. (Note that the stress and coping measures described below were treated as one measure, with the coping measure being administered directly after the stress measure, as reference was made to the stressors described therein).

Demographic Face Sheet. This consisted of the following items: subject's gender, birthdate, school, teacher, grade, ethnic background, length of U.S. residence, and birthplace of subject, as well as subject's parents and grandparents. In addition, subjects indicated which language parents use in communicating with the subject, which language parents use in communicating with others in the home, and which language subject prefers.

Modified Societal, Academic, Familial, and Environmental Acculturative Stress Scale (SAFE-C). This modification of the SAFE Scale (Padilla, Wagatsuma, & Lindholm, 1985), originally designed for use with adolescents and adults, measures the amount of acculturative stress a child experiences. The SAFE-C consists of 36 items, of which 20 statements illustrate potentially stressful situations that may be specific to ethnic minorities (e.g., "I feel bad when others make jokes about people who are in the same culture group as me"), and 16 statements describe potentially stressful situations applicable to all individuals regardless of ethnic background (e.g., "When someone in my family is sick").

Utilizing a 6-point Likert format, subjects indicated first whether the statement was relevant to their experience; then, subjects noted how much the statement bothered him/her (each point from one to five represents the following in ascending order: doesn't bother me, almost never bothers me, sometimes bothers me, often bothers me, bothers me a lot); a "0" was recorded if the statement did not apply to the child. Scores for each item were tallied to establish a total acculturative stress score; hence, the maximum potential range was 0 to 180 with higher scores indicating higher

levels of acculturative stress. Interitem reliability of the SAFE-C using Cronbach's alpha was found to be .91.

Adolescent-Coping Orientation for Problem Experience (A-COPE). A short version of the A-COPE, developed for children ranging in age from 10 to 17 years (Patterson & McCubbin, 1987), was used to identify the coping behaviors employed to deal with the types of stressors described in the SAFE scale (e.g., "Figure out how to handle the problem"). The long version of the A-COPE is comprised of 54 items with factor loadings on 12 factors above .40 (eigenvalues of these factors are 1.0 and above). To develop the 33-item short version used herein, only the top three items in each factor with the highest factor loadings were used (except for Factors 8, 9 and 11, which are comprised of only two items; hence, both items were included on the short version).

Utilizing a 5-point Likert format, subjects indicated how often he/she engaged in the behavior described. Each point from one to five represented the following in ascending order: never, hardly ever, sometimes, often, most of the time (five items were reverse-scored). For purposes of this study, only responses to two factors were analyzed: Factor 3 (problem-focused strategies) and 4 (emotion-focused strategies). Items in factor 3 were tallied to establish an emotion-focused coping score; likewise, items in factor 4 were tallied to establish a problem-focused coping score. The maximum potential range for each of these factors is 3 to 15, with higher scores indicating more extensive use of strategies relevant to the factor. The measure was generally found to be reliable, with Cronbach's alpha calculated as .74.

Self-Perception Profile for Children. This scale, developed by Harter (1985), involves two different measures: a 36-item scale which assesses the subject's perceptions of his/her abilities (the "What I Am Like" measure); and a 10-item scale which measures the subject's appraisal of the importance of those abilities (the "Importance" measure). Both scales are comprised of the following domains: Scholastic Competence, Social Acceptance, Athletic Competence, Physical Appearance, and Behavioral Conduct. The "What I Am Like" measure also includes a Global Self-Worth domain. For purposes of this study, only responses on the "What I Am Like" measure in the following domains were analyzed: Scholastic Competence (a measure of subject's perceptions of his/her ability to perform in school) and Social Acceptance (a measure of subject's perceptions of how well he/she is received by peers).

The six items in each domain were tallied, representing subject's self-perceived competence in that domain. Scores in each domain can range from 6 to 24, with higher scores indicating more perceived competence in that domain. This measure was found to be reliable (Cronbach's alpha = .84).

Teacher's Rating Scale of Child's Actual Behavior. This 15-item measure developed by Harter (1985) was completed by subject's teacher in order to assess the teacher's perception of subject's actual performance in five domains: Scholastic Competence, Social Acceptance, Athletic Competence, Physical Appearance, and Behavioral Conduct. For each item, teachers were instructed to read two statements describing two very different types of children, one of which the teacher selected as

the more accurate description of the subject (e.g., "This child is really good at his/her school work" or "This child can't do the school work assigned"). The teacher then determined if the statement selected was "Really true" or "Sort of true" for the subject.

For each statement which described a highly competent child, responses of "Really true" received a score of four, and responses of "Sort of true" received a score of three. For each statement which described a less competent child, responses of "Really true" received a score of one, and responses of "Sort of true" received a score of two. Items in each domain were tallied, making the maximum potential range for each domain 3 to 12, with higher scores indicating more competence in that domain. This measure was generally found to be reliable, with Cronbach's alpha calculated as .71. For purposes of this study, only scores from the scholastic competence domain will be used.

Procedure

Data for this study were taken from an existing larger body of data obtained as follows: A one-on-one structured interview format was used, lasting approximately 30 minutes. Research assistants were trained in the proper administration of the measures, which included a script that was read verbatim to subjects (see Appendix B). The script included directions for each measure, a sample item to practice with the subject, as well as a debriefing statement. All interviews were conducted during school hours on school premises.

RESULTS

A check of the distribution of scores on all variables of interest (teacher's perceptions of scholastic competence, acculturative stress, emotion-focused coping, problem-focused coping, self-perceived scholastic competence and social acceptance) found all distributions to be normal. Correlations among those variables and key demographic variables are shown on Table 1. As indicated, no significant relationships were found between either of the perceptions of scholastic competence scores and any demographic variable (ethnic group, gender, age, length of U.S. residence, birthplace of subject, language preference). Significant correlations found on the table can be understood by noting the coding scheme used: for ethnic group, 1 = Euroamerican, 2 = Latino; for birthplace, 1 = U.S., 2 = Other; for language preference, 1 = English only, 2 = Other (either Spanish only or both Spanish and English).

Levels of Acculturative Stress

To test whether Latinos indeed reported higher levels of acculturative stress than did Euroamericans, an independent samples t-test was performed on acculturative stress scores (see Table 2 for group means). Results found statistically significant differences, $t(78) = -5.30$, $p < .05$., with Latinos scoring higher than Euroamericans as indicated.

	<u>Age</u>	<u>U.S. Residence</u>	<u>Ethnic Group</u>	<u>Gender</u>	<u>Birth-place</u>	<u>Language Preference</u>
Teacher's Perceptions of Scholastic Competence	-.066	.000	.037	-.207	-.075	-.035
Self-Perceived Scholastic Competence	-.045	.019	.037	.035	-.070	-.070
Self-Perceived Social Acceptance	.130	.197	-.318**	-.024	-.024	-.228*
Acculturative Stress	-.001	-.193	.507***	.054	.267*	.283**
Emotion-Focused Coping	.053	-.195	.222*	-.168	-.079	.080
Problem-Focused Coping	-.093	-.264*	.166	.101	.046	-.094

Table 1. Correlation matrix for demographic versus measurement variables; numbers left of dotted line are Pearson *r*; right are point-biserial; *n* = 80; **p* < .05, ***p* < .01, ****p* < .001.

Self-Perceived Social Acceptance

A second independent samples t-test was performed on scores for self-perceived social acceptance to test the hypothesis that Latinos would report lower levels than would Euroamericans. As indicated in Table 3, differences between the groups reached statistical significance, $t(78) = 2.68$, $p < .05$, with Latinos scoring lower than Euroamericans.¹

¹ Regarding alpha inflation, both tests would still find significance using Bonferroni's procedure ($\alpha' = .025$) as the obtained alpha levels (two-tailed) were as follows: < .001 and < .009, respectively.

<u>Groups</u>	<u>n</u>	<u>mean</u>	<u>sd</u>
Euroamericans	32	61.344	25.166
Latinos	48	92.771	26.504

Table 2. *Mean acculturative stress scores for Euroamericans and Latinos.*

<u>Groups</u>	<u>n</u>	<u>mean</u>	<u>sd</u>
Euroamericans	32	16.969	3.116
Latinos	48	14.875	3.618

Table 3. *Mean scores for self-perceived social acceptance by Euroamericans and Latinos.*

Teacher's Perceptions of Subject's Scholastic Competence

Results from the hierarchical regression analyses performed on the data found that a statistically significant amount of the variance in teacher's ratings of scholastic competence, $R^2 = .168$, $F(5, 74) = 2.99$, $p < .05$, could be accounted for by the predictors (ethnic background, acculturative stress, emotion-focused coping, problem-focused coping, and self-perceived scholastic competence). Table 4 indicates the zero-order correlations among all the variables, while Table 5 denotes the zero-order correlations, R^2 added, and final beta weights for each predictor. Note that Model II error was utilized in determining significance of the R^2 added by each variable (see Cohen & Cohen, 1983). Both emotion-focused coping and scholastic competence made significant contributions to the explained variance in teacher's perceptions at

	<u>I.</u>	<u>II.</u>	<u>III.</u>	<u>IV.</u>	<u>V.</u>	<u>VI.</u>
I. Teacher's Perceptions of Scholastic Competence	1.000					
II. Ethnic Background	.000	1.000				
III. Acculturative Stress	-.218*	.515***	1.000			
IV. Emotion-Focused Coping	-.238*	.170	.309**	1.000		
V. Problem-Focused Coping	-.148	.152	.283**	.348**	1.000	
VI. Self-Perceived Scholastic Competence	.313**	-.129	-.259**	-.077	-.220*	1.000

Table 4. Zero-order correlations among measurement variables; * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$.

<u>Predictor</u>	<u>r</u>	<u>R² Added</u>	<u>β Weight</u>
Ethnic Group	.000	.000	.154
Acculturative Stress	-.218*	.065*	-.168
Emotion-Focused Coping	-.238*	.033	-.192
Problem-Focused Coping	-.148	.002	.003
Self-Perceived Competence	.313**	.069*	.275*

Note: $R^2 = .168$; Adjusted $R^2 = .112$;
 $F(5,74) = 2.987^*$; $n = 80$.

Table 5. Results from hierarchical regression of teacher's perceptions of scholastic competence; * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$.

the time of entry; however, in the final equation only self-perceived scholastic competence was statistically significant as a predictor of teacher's perceptions of scholastic competence.

Mediating Influence of Coping

To test the proposed mediation models, a series of regression equations were conducted on data from the Latino subsample, pursuant to suggestions by Judd and Kenny (1981b, cited in Baron & Kenny, 1986). In order to establish path coefficients for the model, three regression equations were performed: First for path "a" (cf. Figure 1 for path designations), the mediator (emotion-focused coping) was regressed on the independent variable (acculturative stress); then for path "c," the criterion variable (scholastic competence) was regressed on the independent variable; finally for paths "b" and "a'," the criterion variable was regressed on both the independent variable and the mediator.

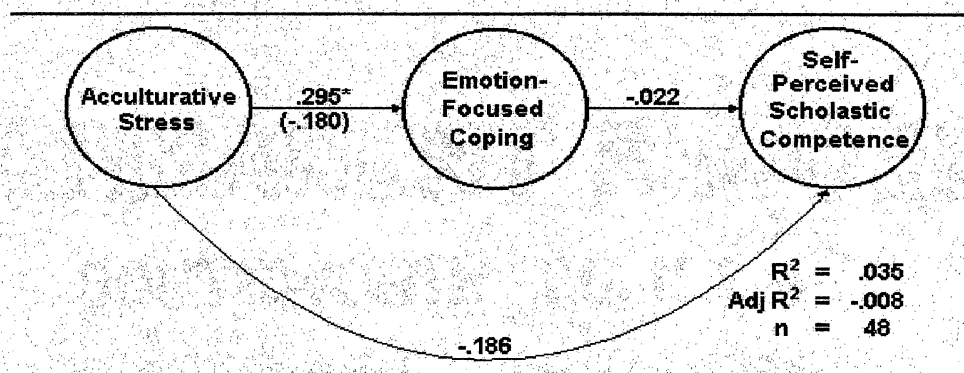


Figure 3. Results from test of mediation model wherein emotion-focused coping mediates impact of acculturative stress on self-perceived scholastic competence; * $p < .05$.

Perfect mediation exists when the path from the independent variable to the criterion variable is not significantly different from zero, while both paths from the

independent variable to the mediator, and the mediator to the criterion are significantly different from zero. If the path from the criterion variable to the dependent variable is significant, support for a simple mediation model can still exist if the coefficient from this direct path is less than (or more than, depending on the proposed impact of the mediator) the coefficient obtained in the final equation (i.e., path coefficient a' shown on Figure 1). As shown on Figure 3, none of these conditions was found in this model. Although the path from acculturative stress to emotion-focused coping was significant, the coefficient for the path from emotion-focused coping to scholastic competence was not. Moreover, the amount of explained variance in self-perceived scholastic competence resulting from the final regression equation was nonsignificant. Consequently, a model of mediation was not supported.

Similar procedures were followed to test problem-focused coping as a mediator. Figure 4 shows that none of the path coefficients were found to be significant, neither was the resulting explained variance in self-perceived scholastic competence found to be significant.

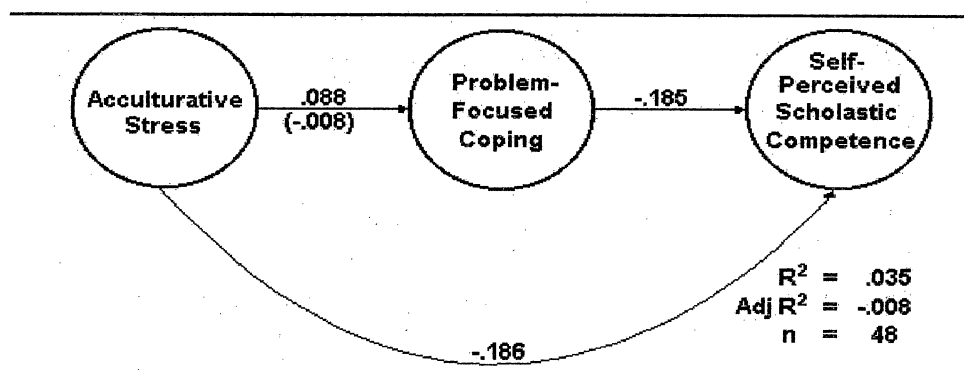


Figure 4. Results from test of mediation model wherein problem-focused coping mediates impact of acculturative stress on self-perceived scholastic competence; $*p < .05$.

These procedures were once again followed to test whether the interaction of acculturative stress and emotion-focused coping mediated the effects of self-perceived scholastic competence on teacher's perceptions. As shown on Figure 5, a significant path coefficient was found from the mediator to teacher's perceptions, and the resulting variance explained was also significant, $F(2,45) = 4.032$, $p < .05$; however, the path from self-perceived scholastic competence to the mediator was nonsignificant. Consequently, a model of mediation cannot be supported.

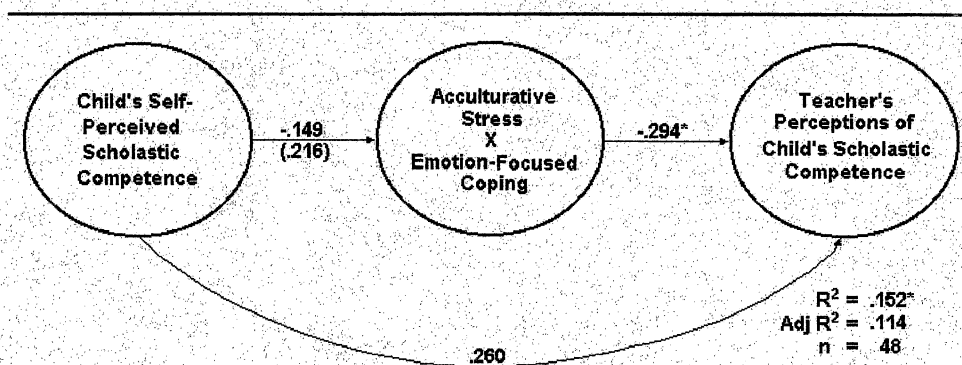


Figure 5. Model of mediating influence of interaction of acculturative stress and emotion-focused coping on impact of self-perceived scholastic competence on teacher's perceptions; * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$.

DISCUSSION

Findings supported the hypotheses related to differences between Euroamerican and Latino children: Latino children indeed reported higher levels of acculturative stress and lower levels of self-perceived social acceptance than did their Euroamerican peers. Given that the context from which acculturative stress arises is primarily a social one, it is reasonable to suggest that a child who experiences acculturative stress would be "tuned in" or sensitized to how accepted he/she is among peers. While the analysis herein does not accommodate the conclusion that acculturative stress directly impacts one's sense of social acceptance, the correlational nature of these variables is clear: Significantly lower levels of self-perceived social acceptance can be found among individuals who experience significantly higher levels of acculturative stress -- and those individuals overwhelmingly tend to be ethnic minority children. How, then, is the school performance of ethnic minority children affected by these variables? According to the data herein, the impact is not direct.

Analysis of the contributions of ethnic background, acculturative stress, emotion-focused coping, problem-focused coping, and self-perceived scholastic competence to the variance in teacher's perceptions of scholastic competence as determined by the child's actual school performance found only self-perceived scholastic competence to be a significant predictor. Despite the tremendous group differences in levels of acculturative stress, the significant negative correlation between acculturative stress and teacher's perceptions, and the significant contribution to the variance at the time of entry, acculturative stress was not a significant predictor

of teacher's perceptions of scholastic competence given the "bigger picture."

Consequently, a child's experience with acculturative stress did not have a direct impact on teachers' perceptions of competence. What other factors could be affecting the impact acculturative stress has on children's school performance? One plausible suggestion may be the type of coping strategies employed by the child.

As observable behaviors, coping strategies potentially link acculturative stress to teacher's perceptions of competence. Because teachers are able to see a child's behavioral response to a stressor and evaluate its appropriateness and/or its effectiveness in reducing any potential negative consequences, it is possible that such behaviors could be used by teachers as evidence of the child's level of competence. However logical this may sound, these data do not clearly define the relationship between acculturative stress and teacher's perceptions of scholastic competence.

For example, tests of how coping strategies influence the relationship between acculturative stress and self-perceived scholastic competence found neither emotion-focused nor problem-focused strategies to be significant mediators of the effects of acculturative stress. That is, these coping strategies neither ameliorated nor aggravated the effects of acculturative stress on a child's own perceptions of his/her school ability. In addition, a test of the mediating function of the interaction between acculturative stress and emotion-focused coping (the strategy assumed to be a best fit for this type of stress) on the effects of self-perceived scholastic competence on teacher's perceptions did not fit the proposed model. Consequently, the extent to which a child experiences acculturative stress and controls its effects with emotion-focused

coping strategies does not impact the influence of self-perceived scholastic competence on teacher's perceptions.

Rather than the type of coping a child employs in dealing with acculturative stress, these data indicate that the most compelling factor in predicting teacher's perceptions of a child's scholastic competence is the child's own perceptions of his/her scholastic competence. Does this suggest that children in this age group are able to realistically assess their scholastic abilities independently, or are their assessments reflections of how teacher's perceive them (and, hence, how teacher's behave toward them)?

According to Eccles and her colleagues (1983) -- in addition to Harter's (1985) work regarding development of the self -- the second point is the more plausible one. Despite the significantly higher levels of acculturative stress found among the Latino children, no significant differences existed in teacher's perceptions of scholastic competence -- and this lack of differences could not be accounted for by the kind of coping strategies employed when faced with acculturative stress. This may be due to the fact that other variables not examined herein (such as locus of control or task value) play a significant part in the process of deflecting or influencing the impact of acculturative stress on school performance.

However, a more critical error in this study relates to construct validity: Because the coping measure used herein has not been shown to be appropriate for the (approximately) 9-year-old children in this study (the tested and validated range of the A-COPE is 10 to 17 years of age), and because the terms used herein to differentiate

between coping strategies (while conceptually similar) are not those specifically used by the developers of the A-COPE, the validity of "emotion-focused" and "problem-focused" coping as constructs is called into question. Subsequent work in this area should utilize the approach taken by Mena and his colleagues (Mena, Padilla, & Maldonado, 1987), wherein specific coping strategies for those stressors which prove to be problematic for the subject are examined.

Moreover, an additional mediation model should have been tested: It may be that a more appropriate model to test using these data would be the mediating function of self-perceived scholastic competence on the effects of acculturative stress on teacher's perceptions. Given that one's own sense of competence serves as a source of one's beliefs about personal control according to Weisz (1986), this model would correspond closely to the process suggested by Weisz's model of coping: It is the individual's perceptions of his/her own competence which, in part, dictate his/her sense of personal control; it is then from this sense of control that the choice of which coping strategy to use is made. The better the match between the coping strategy used and one's sense of personal control, the better the outcome. (It should be noted, however, that given the cross-sectional nature of these data, limits exist with regard to testing more complex -- and, perhaps, more reliable -- models of the relationships among acculturative stress, coping, and perceptions of competence).

Despite the inherent limits, these data are instructive with regard to one of the fundamental philosophical (rather than legal) notions upon which affirmative action programs have been based -- return again to the haunting words of Chief Justice

Warren in *Brown*: "to separate (ethnic minority children) from others of similar age and qualifications solely because of their race generates a *feeling of inferiority* as to their status in the community that may affect their hearts and minds in a way unlikely ever to be undone" (emphasis added; *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka*, 1954, § 492). Although the Latino children in this study reported experiencing some discomfort related to being members of their ethnic group (i.e., acculturative stress), their perceptions of competence were not directly affected. No *feeling of inferiority* existed among Latinos that was significantly different from their Euroamerican peers. That is not to say that absolutely no feelings of inferiority exist as a result of being members of a stigmatized group; rather, a child's own sense of competence is not solely reliant on his/her racial identification.

What does this mean, then, for affirmative action programs which intend (at least, implicitly) to prevent the persistence or further occurrence of feelings of inferiority among ethnic minorities by increasing minority representation in institutions where they have been historically underrepresented? In the 40 years since *Brown*, some progress has surely been made with regard to increasing minority visibility in institutions from which they were previously restricted. However, it would seem that programs solely based on meeting a racial quota fail to consider the more meaningful point: Yes, integration is helpful -- and in 1954 it was an urgent necessity.

However, in 1994, given the discouraging national statistics on the performance of school children cited earlier, an emphasis on a proportionately equal representation of *all* races in *all* public institutions is not sufficient to meet the educational needs of our

children. With the current passing of the open enrollment law in this state, schools will be more intensely interested in their own accountability, even if only for marketing purposes (i.e., attracting parents and securing the minimum enrollment needed to keep the school open). The issue of ensuring competitive levels of performance -- both on the part of children in the classroom, and on the part of schools as providers of educational services -- will be a key concern.

Today public schools are even more segregated than they were 40 years ago, largely due to residential segregation (Massey & Denton, 1993, cited in Williams, 1994). Consequently, passing a law which enables parents to enroll their child in any public school of their choosing, and the emphasis on school accountability which will result, seems very desirable. However, ethnic minority children and children living in poverty (often, one and the same) will still have fewer choices. Many may stay in their neighborhood schools because of transportation or other problems -- schools which too often lack the resources necessary to provide an adequate education. Policy-makers sincerely interested in improving American public schools would be wise to consider these children who "slip through the cracks." One suggestion may be to devise legislative measures which improve the educational experience of *all* children by transcending the less relevant issue of racial representation, and addressing the more critical issue of residential segregation:

Residential segregation is the institutional apparatus that supports other racially discriminatory processes and binds them into a coherent, uniquely effective system of racial subordination... Until the ghetto is dismantled as a basic institution of American urban life, progress ameliorating racial inequality in other arenas will be slow, fitful, and incomplete (Massey & Denton, 1993, cited in Williams, 1994, p. 32).

APPENDIX A

FOR SCHOOL REPRESENTATIVE: Please complete **Teacher's Rating Scale of Child's Actual Behavior** for this child before interview begins.

_____**FOR INTERVIEWER**_____

Date of Interview: ____ / ____ / ____ **Interviewer:** _____
Child's gender: Male ____ Female ____ **Birthdate:** ____ / ____ / ____
School: _____ **Teacher:** _____ **Grade:** _____

Ethnic Background: (check all that apply)

____ Caucasian	____ African American	____ Mexican American
____ Latin American	____ Korean American	____ Japanese American
____ Filipino American	____ Chinese American	____ American Indian
____ Jewish American	____ Native American/ American Indian	____ Other: _____ (specify)

Language(s) spoken at home:

Parents to you: _____
 Parents to each other or to other adults at home: _____
 Which language are you most comfortable with?: _____

How long has the child been in the United States (in years): _____

Birthplace of: Child _____
 Mother _____ Father _____
 Maternal Grandmother _____ Paternal Grandmother _____
 Maternal Grandfather _____ Paternal Grandfather _____

THE FOLLOWING IS FOR DATA INPUT USE ONLY

TRSCB:	SC1R	[	]	SC6	[	]	SC11	[]
	SA2	[	]	SA7R	[	]	SA12R	[]
	AC3R	[	]	AC8R	[	]	AC13	[]
	PA4R	[	]	PA9R	[	]	PA14	[]
	BC5R	[	]	BC10R	[	]	BC15	[]

TEACHER'S RATING SCALE OF CHILD'S ACTUAL BEHAVIOR: For each child, please indicate what you feel to be his/her actual competence on each question, in your opinion. First decide what kind of child he or she is like, the one described in A or B. Then indicate whether this is just sort of true or really true for that individual. Thus, for each item, check *one* of four boxes.

REALLY TRUE	SORT OF TRUE		
[4]	[3]	1.A.	This child is really good at his/her school work OR
[2]	[1]	1.B.	This child can't do the school work assigned
[1]	[2]	2.A.	This child finds it hard to make friends OR
[3]	[4]	2.B.	For this child it's pretty easy
[4]	[3]	3.A.	This child does really well at all kinds of sports OR
[2]	[1]	3.B.	This child isn't very good when it comes to sports
[4]	[3]	4.A.	This child is good-looking OR
[2]	[1]	4.B.	This child is not very good-looking
[4]	[3]	5.A.	This child is usually well-behaved OR
[2]	[1]	5.B.	This child is often no well-behaved
[1]	[2]	6.A.	This child often forgets what s/he learns OR
[3]	[4]	6.B.	This child can remember things easily
[4]	[3]	7.A.	This child has a lot of friends OR
[2]	[1]	7.B.	This child doesn't have many friends
[4]	[3]	8.A.	This child is better than others his/her age at sports OR
[2]	[1]	8.B.	This child can't play well
[4]	[3]	9.A.	This child has a nice physical appearance OR
[2]	[1]	9.B.	This child doesn't have such a nice physical appearance
[4]	[3]	10.A.	This child usually acts appropriately OR
[2]	[1]	10.B.	This child would be better if s/he acted differently
[1]	[2]	11.A.	This child has trouble figuring out answers in school OR
[3]	[4]	11.B.	This child almost always can figure out the answers
[4]	[3]	12.A.	This child is popular with others his/her age OR
[2]	[1]	12.B.	This child is not very popular

- | | | |
|-----|-----|--|
| [1] | [2] | 13.A. This child doesn't do well at new outdoor games OR |
| [3] | [4] | 13.B. This child is good at new games right away |
| [1] | [2] | 14.A. This child isn't very good-looking OR |
| [3] | [4] | 14.B. This child is pretty good-looking |
| [1] | [2] | 15.A. This child often gets in trouble because of things s/he does OR |
| [3] | [4] | 15.B. This child usually doesn't do things that get him/her in trouble |

WHAT I AM LIKE: For each item, please indicate what you feel to be the most like you. First decide what kind of child you are like, the one described in A or B. Then say whether this is just sort of true or really true for you. So for each item, check only *one* of the four boxes.

REALLY TRUE	SORT OF TRUE		
[4]	[3]	1.A.	Some kids feel that they are very good at their school work BUT
[2]	[1]	1.B.	Other kids worry about whether they can do the school work assigned to them.
[1]	[2]	2.A.	Some kids find it hard to make friends BUT
[3]	[4]	2.B.	Other kids find it's pretty easy to make friends
[4]	[3]	3.A.	Some kids do very well at all kinds of sports BUT
[3]	[2]	3.B.	Other kids don't feel that they are very good when it comes to sports
[4]	[3]	4.A.	Some kids are happy with the way they look BUT
[2]	[1]	4.B.	Other kids are not happy with the way they look
[1]	[2]	5.A.	Some kids often do not like the way they behave BUT
[3]	[4]	5.B.	Other kids usually like the way they behave
[1]	[2]	6.A.	Some kids are often unhappy with themselves BUT
[3]	[4]	6.B.	Other kids are pretty pleased with themselves
[4]	[3]	7.A.	Some kids feel like they are just as smart as other kids their age BUT
[2]	[1]	7.B.	Other kids aren't so sure and wonder if they are as smart
[4]	[3]	8.A.	Some kids have a lot of friends BUT
[2]	[1]	8.B.	Other kids don't have very many friends
[1]	[2]	9.A.	Some kids wish they could be a lot better at sports BUT
[3]	[4]	9.B.	Other kids feel they are good enough at sports
[4]	[3]	10.A.	Some kids are happy with their height and weight BUT
[2]	[1]	10.B.	Other kids wish their height or weight were different

- [4] [3] 11.A. Some kids usually do the right thing **BUT**
 [2] [1] 11.B. Other kids often don't do the right thing
- [1] [2] 12.A. Some kids don't like the way they are leading their
 life **BUT**
 [3] [4] 12.B. Other kids do like the way they are leading their life
- [1] [2] 13.A. Some kids are pretty slow in finishing their school
 work **BUT**
 [3] [4] 13.B. Other kids can do their school work quickly
- [1] [2] 14.A. Some kids would like to have a lot more friends **BUT**
 [3] [4] 14.B. Other kids have as many friends as they want
- [4] [3] 15.A. Some kids think they could do well at just about any new
 sports activity they haven't tried before **BUT**
 [2] [1] 15.B. Other kids are afraid they might not do well at sports
 they haven't ever tried
- [1] [2] 16.A. Some kids wish their body was different **BUT**
 [3] [4] 16.B. Other kids like their body the way it is
- [4] [3] 17.A. Some kids usually act the way they are supposed to **BUT**
 [2] [1] 17.B. Other kids often don't act the way they are supposed to
- [4] [3] 18.A. Some kids are happy with themselves as a person **BUT**
 [2] [1] 18.B. Other kids are often not happy with themselves
- [1] [2] 19.A. Some kids often forget what they learn **BUT**
 [3] [4] 19.B. Other kids can remember things easily
- [4] [3] 20.A. Some kids are always doing things with a lot
 of kids **BUT**
 [2] [1] 20.B. Other kids usually do things by themselves
- [4] [3] 21.A. Some kids feel that they are better than others their age
 at sports **BUT**
 [2] [1] 21.B. Other kids don't feel they can play as well.
- [1] [2] 22.A. Some kids wish their physical appearance (how they
 look) was different **BUT**
 [3] [4] 22.B. Other kids like their physical appearance the way it is

- [1] [2] 23.A. Some kids usually get in trouble because of things they do **BUT**
- [3] [4] 23.B. Other kids usually don't do things that get them in trouble
- [4] [3] 24.A. Some kids like the kind of person they are **BUT**
- [2] [1] 24.B. Other kids often wish they were someone else
- [4] [3] 25.A. Some kids do very well at their classwork **BUT**
- [2] [1] 25.B. Other kids don't do very well at their classwork
- [1] [2] 26.A. Some kids wish that more people their age liked them **BUT**
- [3] [4] 26.B. Other kids feel that most people their age do like them
- [1] [2] 27.A. In games and sports some kids usually watch instead of play **BUT**
- [3] [4] 27.B. Other kids usually play rather than just watch sports
- [1] [2] 28.A. Some kids wish something about their face or hair looked different **BUT**
- [3] [4] 28.B. Other kids like their face and hair the way they are
- [1] [2] 29.A. Some kids do things they know they shouldn't do **BUT**
- [3] [4] 29.B. Other kids hardly ever do things they know they shouldn't do
- [4] [3] 30.A. Some kids are very happy being the way they are **BUT**
- [2] [1] 30.B. Other kids wish they were different
- [1] [2] 31.A. Some kids have trouble figuring out the answers in school **BUT**
- [3] [4] 31.B. Other kids almost always can figure out the answers
- [4] [3] 32.A. Some kids are popular with others their age **BUT**
- [2] [1] 32.B. Other kids are not very popular
- [1] [2] 33.A. Some kids don't do well at new outdoor games **BUT**
- [3] [4] 33.B. Other kids are good at new games right away
- [4] [3] 34.A. Some kids think that they are good-looking **BUT**
- [2] [1] 34.B. Other kids think that they are not very good-looking

- [4] [3] 35.A. Some kids behave themselves very well **BUT**
[2] [1] 35.B. Other kids often find it hard to behave themselves
- [1] [2] 36.A. Some kids are not very happy with the way they do a lot
 of things **BUT**
[3] [4] 36.B. Other kids think the way they do things is fine

SAFE-C: Choice of responses to following items -

0	1	2	3	4	5
Doesn't apply	Doesn't bother me	Almost never bothers me	Sometimes bothers me	Often bothers me	Bothers me a lot

1. I feel bad when others make jokes about people who are in the same culture group as me.
2. Talking to new kids...
3. I have more things that get in my way than most people do.
4. It bothers me that people in my family who I am close to don't understand the things that I think are important that are new to them.
5. People in my family who I am close to have plans for when I grow up that I don't like.
6. When someone in my family is very sick...
7. When my parents argue...
8. It's hard for me to tell my friends how I really feel.
9. I don't have any close friends.
10. Asking questions in class...
11. I worry about what other kids think about me.
12. Many people believe certain things about the way people in my culture group act, think, or are, and they treat me as if those things are true.
13. Having to take tests in school...
14. I don't feel at home here in the United States.
15. People think I am shy, when I really just have trouble speaking English.
16. I worry about being sick.
17. The thought of my family and I moving to a new place.
18. I often feel that people purposely try to stop me from getting better at something.
19. I worry that other kids won't like me.
20. It bothers me when people force me to be like everyone else.
21. I worry that other kids are making fun of me.
22. I often feel like people who are supposed to help are really not paying any attention to me.
23. When I am not with my family...
24. Because of the culture group I am in, I don't get the grades I deserve.
25. When I argue with my brother/sister...
26. Getting my report card...
27. It bothers me that I have an accent.
28. It's hard to be away from the country I used to live in.
29. I think a lot about my group and its culture.
30. When some countries of the world don't get along...
31. Talking with my teacher...

32. Because of the culture group I am in, I feel others don't include me in some of the things they do, games the play, etc.
33. It's hard for me to "show off" my family.
34. People think badly of me if I practice customs or I do the "special things" of my culture group.
35. I have a hard time understanding what others say when they speak.
36. I worry about having enough money.

A-COPE: Choice of responses to the following items -

1	2	3	4	5
Never	Hardly ever	Sometimes	Often	Most of the time

When you are bothered by some of the things we just talked about, how often do you...?

1. Try to be funny and make light of it all.
2. Listen to music -- stereo, radio, etc.
3. Eat food.
4. Get more involved in activities at school.
5. Talk to a teacher or counselor at school about what bothers you.
6. Go shopping; buy things you like.
7. Try to improve yourself, like get your body in shape or get better grades.
8. Cry.
9. Try to think of the good things in your life.
10. Be with a boyfriend or girlfriend.
11. Get angry and yell at people.
12. Joke and keep a sense of humor.
13. Talk to a minister/priest/rabbi.
14. Go to church.
15. Use drugs not prescribed by a doctor.
16. Organize your life and what you have to do.
17. Say mean things to people; be sarcastic.
18. Blame others for what's going wrong.
19. Be close with someone you care about.
20. Try to help other people solve their problems.
21. Talk to your mother about what bothers you.
22. Try, on your own, to figure out how to deal with your problems or tensions.
23. Get professional counseling not from a school teacher or counselor.
24. Go to a movie.
25. Daydream about how you would like things to be.
26. Do things with your family.

27. Smoke cigarettes.
28. Pray.
29. Drink beer, wine, or liquor.
30. Sleep.
31. Talk with your father about what bothers you.
32. Talk to a friend about how you feel.
33. Do a strenuous physical activity like jogging, biking, etc.

APPENDIX B

Before gathering demographics:

My name is _____, and for the next 30 minutes or so I will be asking you a bunch of questions about yourself. I want you to know that your answers to those questions are strictly confidential -- that means that no one except for you and I will know what your answers are -- not even your teacher will know! Now, your participation in this is voluntary -- that means if at any time you don't feel like answering a question, you don't have to answer it. In fact, if at any time you want to take a break from the questions just to stretch your legs or walk around for a minute or so, we can do that. And, if at any time you just want to stop this whole thing, we can do that, too. OK? Let's begin.

Before administering SAFE-C:

Here in America there are many groups of people from many different backgrounds. Like you may have learned from your history class, we all have parents, grandparents, great grandparents or some other relative from the past that came from another country to live here in America. That is why there are people who may look differently than you, who may speak a different language than you, and who may do things a little differently than you do. That's because we all have different cultural backgrounds. In fact, people can be grouped by what culture they belong to -- for example, Japanese Americans, African Americans, German Americans, Italian Americans, Jewish Americans, American Indians, etc.; what is your culture group?

I'm going to be reading some statements about some things that you may or may not think about. After I read each statement, I want you to tell me whether or not the statement applies to you -- that is, whether or not the statement is a problem for you. Then, if it is a problem for you, I want you to tell me how much it bothers you using one of the choices on the sheet in front of you. Any questions? Let's begin.

Before administering A-COPE:

I'm going to read some statements that describe a behavior that you might do to handle some of the problems we just asked about -- things that you might do to deal with some of the things that you just said bothered you. After I read each statement I want you to decide how often you do that behavior. Even though you may do some of these things just for fun, I want you to tell me *only* how often you do the behavior as a way of dealing with some of the problems we just talked about.

Choose only one of the responses shown on the sheet in front of you. Anytime I say the words "parent, mother, father, brother, or sister," they also mean step-parent, step-mother, etc. OK? Let's begin.

Before administering "What I am like":

We have some sentences here and we are interested in what you are like, what kind of person you are like. This is a survey, **not** a test. There are no right or wrong answers. Since kids are very different from one another, each of you will answer something different, and that's OK.

Let me explain how these questions work. I will be reading two different statements that describe two kinds of kids. First, we want to know which statement is most like you. Then, I want you to tell me if that statement is **really true** for you, or only **sort of true** for you. Let's try one out for practice (*read sample and have child respond accordingly*). Do you understand now? Let's continue.

Debriefing Statement:

There are many different people from so many cultural backgrounds in the United States. People may not experience things in the same way. What we did today is to try to better understand how you feel about certain things that some kids find difficult. Do you have any questions or did you find any question that bothered you? Would you like to talk about it? All people have important things to offer society. By understanding the experiences of people from different cultures, we will be able to better help them if they need it. And having so many different people from so many different cultural backgrounds is what makes America a terrific place. Eventhough someone has a different cultural background than yours, they are still Americans. We should all be proud of our cultural background.

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